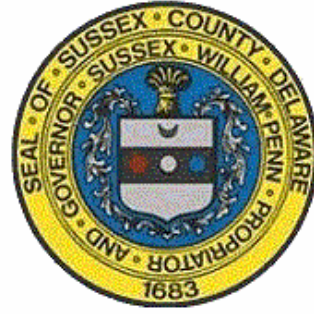


News Release



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Sussex County helps community work toward new beginning

GEORGETOWN, Del. – Chinese philosopher Lao Tzu is credited with noting that “a journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step.” In the historically African-American community of West Rehoboth, civic-minded residents are taking their own steps on a miles-long journey to improve the neighborhood they call home.

Sussex County Council is helping them along the way.

County Council, at its Tuesday, Oct. 18, meeting, awarded a \$50,000 one-time grant to the West Side New Beginnings organization. The money will help the non-profit organization pay for community improvements – those include streetlights and trash removal – and fund after-school programs.

West Side New Beginnings leaders say street lighting and trash removal are needed to improve health and safety in the community. They also stressed that the after-school programs to provide tutoring and meals to young people are key to those children achieving academically, and later in life.

The grant is the largest the council has ever given the organization. Council has awarded West Side New Beginnings \$7,400 in all since 1998. And it is the most money West Side New Beginnings has ever received in any one donation since the organization was formed in 1994.

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“This means a lot to this community and to the children,” said Brenda Kelley, West Side’s youth program and center director. “It means people helping people to survive, to educate the children and give them a head start in life.”

Council awarded the grant as part of an effort in recent years to lend assistance to lower-income areas in Sussex County, said County Administrator Robert L. Stickels.

In the past two years, Sussex County Council has donated \$100,000 to help the communities of Polly Branch near Selbyville and Greentop near Lincoln, which also suffer some of the same economic and social problems West Rehoboth is battling.

In recent months, the county also has provided \$28,000 for land acquisition to the West Rehoboth Community Land Trust. “That money combined with this \$50,000 grant today, we hope, will give the West Rehoboth area a solid boost in its efforts to improve the living conditions for all who live there,” Stickels said.

Kelley said the money would go far beyond paying for something like lights to illuminate West Rehoboth’s streets. It will serve as a beacon of hope, one that shines on the possibilities a community can achieve by working together and with the help of others.

“This will help to empower the people who live in the community,” Kelley said.

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